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1 October 2013

Mrs Ann Robinson  
Headteacher  
Buttsbury Junior School  
Norsey View Drive  
Billericay  
Essex  
CM12 0QR

Dear Mrs Robinson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Buttsbury Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 30 September 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governor are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Improve the school's action planning so that the link between pupils' progress and their attainment is clearer.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. We observed teaching in all 16 classes, spending longer in the Year 6 classes. We also discussed achievement data, and external support. I scrutinised local authority and consultant visit notes, records of observations of teaching, governing body minutes and information relating to safeguarding arrangements.

## **Context**

Three teachers retired at the end of the summer term and one was promoted to a deputy headteacher post in another Essex school. Three new teachers started at the beginning of the autumn term and one increased her teaching hours.

## **Main findings**

You have been instrumental in putting in place a number of improvements since the last inspection and monitoring their success. Following the inspection the school produced a detailed improvement plan. Improvement planning is focused on the Ofsted areas for improvement and sets clear targets for accelerating pupils' progress. It lacks equally explicit targets for pupils' attainment. Some other success criteria are also too vague.

More teaching is now good. Because teachers from each year group have the chance to plan and review their work together there is greater consistency. Much teaching is lively and interesting and engages pupils well. Introductions to lessons ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and are clearer about how their work will be assessed. Some teachers use questioning very well to keep all of the pupils interested and ensure there is good pace. Others miss opportunities to ask challenging questions or invite pupils to reflect on what they think the answer might be. Marking is frequent, detailed and usually tells pupils how well they are doing and how to improve. However, these comments are too rarely followed-up to make sure they have been acted on. The school has put in place a number of strategies to improve the quality of writing including more extended writing in a range of subjects and greater exemplification of high expectations.

The school has ensured parents are kept well informed about recent changes. It has held meetings to explain how it will improve, has re-launched the school website and offers parents the chance to find out about the new curriculum.

The governing body plays an important role in school improvement. It diligently monitors the school improvement plan and is increasingly well placed to ask probing questions about pupils' achievement. Governors would be even better placed to do this if some success criteria in the action plan were more easily measured and the link between planned actions, pupils' progress, and attainment was more explicit. A range of professional development has been put in place for staff across the school, including support to improve the quality of lesson observations and teaching.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

## **External support**

The school has made good use of external support and advice. You have been proactive in seeking the support of the local authority and have bought-in additional consultancy to ensure rapid improvement. Buttsbury Junior has strong links across a cluster of local schools. This is helping to improve teaching through observing outstanding practice and enhances the quality of provision for pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Essex local authority and the Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**